

Dear Environmental Protection Agency FOIA Officer,

This is a request for expedited processing of a Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") request, made pursuant to 28 CFR 16.5(d)(1). On September 14, 2017, I submitted a FOIA request seeking copies of:

1) Copies of all emails with "adm14pruitt.scott@epa.gov" in the "To," "From," and "Cc" lines, between August 17, 2017 and August 24, 2017. This means all emails sent to and from this address, as well as all emails this address has been copied on, between this time period

2) Copies of all emails forwarded to and from "adm14pruitt.scott@epa.gov," between August 17, 2017 and August 24, 2017.

3) Copies of all Skype chats/instant messages (including group chats) belonging to the EPA Skype for Business account tied to "adm14pruitt.scott@epa.gov."

I believe this request meets the criteria for expedited processing under 28 CFR 16.5(d)(1)(iv), as "[a] matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity which affect public confidence." 28 CFR 16.5(d)(1)(iv).

In June, Scott Pruitt's use of multiple email accounts as Oklahoma Attorney General was widely and heavily covered by the media. Emails obtained by the Center for Media and Democracy showed that Pruitt used two emails to conduct official business during his role as attorney general.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2017/06/14/pruitt-used-two-government-email-addresses-in-his-last-job-he-told-congress-he-used-on>

Pruitt told the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee that he only ever used official email accounts to conduct business as attorney general. However, a set of different emails obtained by the Center for Media and Democracy showed that Pruitt had copied emails to a private Apple account during his tenure as attorney general.

"The emails copied to Pruitt's personal account included ones from the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a corporate-backed group that focuses on state legislatures; the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, which has substantial interests in EPA issues; and members of Pruitt's staff."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/03/02/new-epa-head-told-congress-he-never-used-personal-email-for-government-business-but-it-turns-out-he-did>

In light of this, in June, Senators Whitehouse, Carper, Sanders, Merkley, Markey, and Duckworth sent an inquiry to Pruitt on behalf of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, asking for a list of all email addresses used by Pruitt as EPA Administrator (addresses other than pruitt.scott@epa.gov).

https://www.whitehouse.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2017%2006%2015%20Scott%20Pruitt_Emails.pdf

In May, Pruitt responded to the Senators, saying: “The Agency maintains a primary email account to contact me, pruitt.scott@epa.gov. EPA staff have also established secondary accounts in the Agency's Outlook email system that are used for calendaring, scheduling, and internal communications. My staff is currently considering the best means to provide the public with the important information regarding my day-to-day activities and meetings on behalf of the Agency.”

https://www.eenews.net/assets/2017/05/06/document_gw_01.pdf

So far, nothing has been conveyed to the public by either Pruitt or his staff regarding these “secondary accounts,” or any other email account connected to Pruitt.

In August, a *New York Times* reported that Pruitt has been conducting his duties as EPA Administrator in secret. Pruitt has allegedly instructed staff to leave little to no paper trail; discouraging them from taking notes, and instead communicating verbally. Pruitt allegedly does not take calls from his personal office phone, instead taking calls from other offices. EPA employees now allegedly require an escort to gain entrance to the floor Pruitt's office is on.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/11/us/politics/document-Pruitt-and-Secrecy-Documents.html>

There can be no question that EPA transparency under Pruitt has been the subject of intense media and Congressional scrutiny. Especially after the events of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Harvey, which claimed human lives and devastated the southern United States, the conduct and communications of Pruitt during this time are a matter of immediate public interest.

The American public is deeply concerned about a lack of government transparency, particularly regarding the EPA, whose governance has a direct impact on human health and communities nationwide. While the EPA Administrator and EPA spokespersons have vaguely acknowledged these concerns, there is no substitute for the disclosure of internal EPA records concerning the use of Pruitt's alleged email accounts. Indeed, the very purpose of the FOIA is to lessen the public's dependence on official agency statements and open the underlying documentation to public scrutiny. This is clearly an instance in which expedited processing of an FOIA request is warranted.

I am a journalist writing for Motherboard, VICE's technology and science site, and that this request is being made as part of news gathering.

(https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/contributor/sarah-emerson)

The requested documents will be made available to the general public, and this request is not being made for commercial purposes. They will be used in the course of my reporting for Motherboard.

(www.motherboard.vice.com)

Thank you for your consideration of this request. As applicable Department regulations provide, I will anticipate your determination within ten (10) calendar days.

Sincerely,

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